

BODILY IDIOMS

A NOTE ON 'JULIUS CAESAR'

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I. INTRODUCTION :

This paper is a sort of continuation of my previous study on 'Gestures in the New Testament', in which it became apparent that gestures in general have a universal appealing power even to us foreigners, excepting a few cases peculiar to the English speaking people, regardless of nationality. In that paper I said 'gestures are so appealing to the fundamental psychology of human mind that their intimacy with our daily life will easily tend to arouse an empathy in our mind. They don't irritate or bewilder the reader, although they are at the expense of a personal distinguishing uniqueness of style, i. e. an expression of a writer's original personality.' This was true of the gestures in the New Testament. As for Shakespeare, however, we need make some modification of my saying in the latter part. That is, his greatness is never weakened or shadowed by the familiarity and intimacy of expressions he uses. This has led me to the present study on 'bodily idioms' in *Julius Caesar*.

What is, then, meant by 'bodily idioms'? The word 'idiom' has various meanings : one is 'the form of speech peculiar to a people or nation: another is, those forms of expression, of grammatical construction, or of phrasing, which are peculiar to a language, and approved by its usage, although the meanings they convey are often different from their grammatical or logical signification: the third is, in its narrower sense,' the idiosyncrasies of a language, and above all, those phrases which are verbal anomalies, which transgress, that is to say, either 'the laws of grammar or the laws of logic.' (L. P. Smith. Words and Idioms.) In this paper we give no special character to the word 'idiom', just taking the word for something equivalent to 'phrase', sometimes bearing an additional meaning besides the bare combination of each component. By 'bodily' we mean 'pertaining to human body